

## 2016 National Estuary Program Workshop Notes

### Thursday February 25, 2016: CCMP Update/Revision

Bill Long, Acting Associate Director, OCPD, Facilitator: We know we have to continuously work to make the CCMP process better. What are the benefits we gain from having a good CCMP?

- Continued Funding
- Partnership - Brings other partners to the table
- Alignment
- Prioritization
- Inspiration
- Articulates the policies, tools, and strategies
- A well-developed CCMP enables EPA to better carry out the other programs
- It helps everyone tell the story about the benefits of the NEPs

Nancy Laurson, CMB: We really appreciate the feedback from the Directors. The letter you sent was very helpful. We really value your experience and perspective working at the local level. I'm looking forward to today getting a better understanding of your concerns and to clear up some misconceptions. I would also like to hear from some of you who have updated your CCMP – do you have advice to share with the other programs?

With the CCMP checklist, we are trying to communicate essential elements, and provide transparency and criteria for consistency. We are working to try and streamline the requirements and have significantly reduced what was asked for with regard to original CCMPs. We try to provide as much flexibility so that your CCMP is appropriate for your estuary and stakeholders while at the same time making sure that the action plans are tied back to 320. We want to stay true to the stakeholder process where the specific content is local driven, while making sure Action Plans can be tied to Section 320.

Today we do not plan on coming to any final decisions. We have two conference calls scheduled in the next couple weeks so that we can finalize everything by mid-April. We also need to make a decision soon about potential funding support for CCMP revisions.

Our aim today is to get a better understanding of these 3 topics:

1. Specificity
2. Elements
3. Timing

Bill Long (EPA): Nancy has identified these 3 areas as discussion needs. This is not intended to be a point-by-point decision making session. One of the areas where folks struggle is in naming implementers. Another issue is funding and partners, especially related to designing and implementing monitoring.

Nancy: It's really more the monitoring element and trying to detect change. Also, under specificity we want to discuss the level of detail. In terms of timing, Margerita has come up with a nice diagram.

Bill: We are going to open up the floor for discussion.

- Jen Adkins, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary: We are starting the CCMP process and my biggest fear is that we will bring everyone together and do it wrong. Guidance/Process needs to be well thought out and solid. No late changes to the guidance/process. Thinking is that once we have mustered the community to put the CCMP together we can't go back and make a change.
- Nancy, EPA: I recommend having the NEP and the regional coordinator communicate early and often. You can't ever over communicate.
- Bernice: The guidelines were established with the intent that the regions and EPA Headquarters would reach a consensus about the most comfortable and efficient level of Headquarters involvement.
- Stan Hale, Barnegat Bay: Let's just start with monitoring. Until the Governor committed \$3M/year to us for monitoring we did not have a comprehensive monitoring program. Now we do: 15,000 samples and 14 partners. This is in support of a USGS hydrodynamic model. We now have a much better handle on the Bay. The State and USGS have made it clear that they can not continue to support this baywide monitoring program. There are some things that I would like to set in place and continue into the future while others will have to be flexible. It's a very difficult challenge. Even the region acknowledges that its unreasonable to expect this level of funding. Monitoring is essential for evaluating the status of the Bay and the effectiveness of our programs. Even volunteer monitoring networks have considerable cost.
- Curtis Bohlen, Casco Bay: I want to talk about monitoring in the context of our CCMP revision. In doing our revision, we learned that there are about a half dozen organizations doing monitoring that we didn't know about. In the process, of doing our CCMP we have identified challenges that we are facing and needs for additional data beyond traditional monitoring plans. We learned that developing our monitoring plan will take several years – it's not going to happen all at once.
- Liz Donley, Charlotte Harbor: It would be great to have a pre-review of the existing CCMP so that we have a sense of what changes EPA thinks we need before we start revisions and are under the gun of an imminent timeline.
- Alison Branco, Peconic: A lot of our partners are gun-shy in terms of being named as an implementer because they often cannot guarantee long-term budgets thus this can potentially strain relationships with partners. None of them wanted to be the lead.
- When we went through revising our CCMP we did a cross-walk with other management plans in our watershed in order to identify who would be the lead for each action. Most partners did not want to be the lead because they cannot commit financially to it. Even though they supported the action and activity they did not want another document binding them to action. We need to make sure that we are not locking partners in with a tight timeline and budget that they cannot sustain. A lot of what we do is opportunity driven (such as a hurricane) so we don't want to be locked into an old priority.
- Holly Greening, Tampa Bay: We are in the middle of our CCMP update. We are doing 5 actions at a time. One of the actions that came out of our policy review board was to link the actions in our CCMP to local government Comprehensive Plans which are the only things that bind them to action. This is the type of thing we want to focus on but we don't know what this will look like or who the lead entities will be. This is really inspirational! Being forward looking is important for us and our partners!

- Pam DiBona, Mass Bays: The problem of scale has not been brought up here. I'm going to bring up Mass Bays as a case study. We have spent 2 years with our stakeholders and action committees. The problem is that it can't be as specific as who is going to do what when. Need to do the direction yearly. I have 3 Bays and 47 embayments and I can't say what is going to happen to them in the next 2, 5, 10 years. I can't ask them to do anything beyond their yearly grant because each year I have to put out for a public bid who is going to be working for me. I think the flexibility for what the CCMPs look for needs to take into consideration the scale and time and structure. I have \$600k each year. My mouth dropped open when I heard that Stan has \$3M per year. I am making a plea for some acknowledgement that we are not all the same.
- Lisa Phipps, Tillamook: Our local district offices were slashed in budget and people and we developed issues around meeting fatigue. We do have key partners. We keep bringing people together around workplans, program evaluations, and so many other plans. It got to the point where folks just said write it and we'll read it and approve it. This is not acceptable because this is not an invested entity. I'm really concerned about meeting fatigue. Now I start my emails all start with I'm sorry since we are a small area and I always have to call on the same people. We do have a great monitoring plan. This is a big deal for people and there is a lot of emotion around it. But at the end of the day these revisions aren't that different from our old CCMP. I encourage the other NEPs to keep headquarters involved since they ultimately sign off.
- Margherita: If you look at the original 320 language, EPA was going to give \$1M and walk away. We immediately realized that was ludicrous so we need a CCMP and implementation. So what do we mean? The CCMP is the goal setting. It's the driver. It's not that level of specificity but it does setup metrics so that you know where your work plan should go. It sets up a continuum of activities. Today's discussion should cover what is the CCMP?, what's in it?, and how do we use it?
- Curtis, Casco Bay: Early in our process of revising our CCMP, we realized that purposes of this document are directed at our community. We realized that we needed to shrink down the text and make it concise to let the community know that we are about action. It's important to tailor these different pieces of information to share with different audiences. The process was great. My management committee was not going to let me get by without setting goals and benchmarks. There are lots of different audiences and purposes.
- Susan Testroet-Bergeron, Barataria-Terrebonne: We have a CCMP and for us it's about the people that we serve. We see thousands of people. We have to be EPAs voice and share with the public how EPAs going to help the fish and recreate and enjoy clean water and ecosystems. We are public servants. We have to serve the public. We have to be the voice of EPA. We have to have the respect of people on the ground. We have to get someone who is in oil and gas to agree with a really green environmentalist.

We need to know at the front end what EPA wants so that we can be opportunistic and still see the big picture. We want to do the right thing. There needs to be an understanding in Washington that we are representing EPA at the local level. We work with vocal citizens.

- Nancy, EPA: CCMPs are locally driven and have to reflect the communities.
- Bill Crowell, APNEP: When we developed our CCMP various folks from RTP and headquarters and other areas were involved as one of the partners at the table to help us guide and implement. Don't put folks as the lead but key partners will work.

- Rob Pirani, New York- New Jersey: We are starting out now and we want to echo the importance of flexibility and the ability to bring in partners. Our annual workplans every year are something that can give EPA confidence that even if our CCMP is broad we are moving forward with EPA goals.
- Rachel: We are conducting a 9 month mid-point check in on our CCMP next update. What has worked with the CCMP and not, and can share that.
- Nancy: Just as your previous CCMP it needs to reflect local priorities. It serves you well to have as much detail as possible in your Annual workplan -- many of the NEPs have vague annual workplans. You can't have vague action plans and vague workplan activities. I've talked to several directors that have inherited vague CCMPs and it means that have to basically do a re-write because they are so vague they don't know what they mean.
- Stan Hale, Barnegat Bay: We have a really detailed workplan. Our state has made a tremendous commitment to water quality monitoring. We are all committed to moving forward. There was a negative editorial saying the state is lying about the state of the Bay. This makes it challenging. It's why the inspirational component is important. Yes we have some differences but it forces us to tighten up and streamline and do our work.
- Bernice: Thank you for this frank conversation. I did not hear much about specificity with action planning.
- Holly Greening, Tampa Bay: We get that specificity in our annual work plan. We leave the CCMP general because it is a 10-year plan.
- Alison Branco, Peconic: Our original CCMP had over 300 actions. Most of these actions are completely irrelevant now. Our overall goals remain constant but the ways to get there are constantly changing. We need to say these are the goals we are aiming for. Here are some of the steps we need to take. But it seems silly to put so much effort into writing step.
- Nancy: There has to be a balance - so you have enough detail in your action plans to avoid what I just mentioned, but not enough for it to equal an annual workplan which contains more detail.